

REMARKS

At the time the present Office Action issued, claims 1 to 13 were pending. Claims 1-3, 5-10, and 12-13 stand rejected. The Examiner has identified Claims 4 and 11 to contain allowable subject matter, but has objected to these claims as being dependent on a rejected base claim. Examiner diligently indicated that these claims 4 and 11 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Attorney for Applicant respectfully thanks the Examiner for having identified the allowable subject matter, and amends claims as explained below.

Explanation of the amendments

The present response amends claim 1 and adds new claims 15 to 29 as will be explained below.

New claim 15 corresponds to the subject matter of claim 4, rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim 1 and intervening claim 3. No additional limitations have been introduced. New claims 16 to 23 are each ultimately dependent on claim 15, and are all based on claims that have been previously presented as dependent on claim 1.

New claim 24 corresponds to the subject matter of claim 11, rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim 1 and intervening claims 8 and 9. No additional limitations have been introduced. New claims 25 to 29 are each ultimately dependent on claim 24, and are all based on claims that have been previously presented as dependent on claim 1.

Claim 1 has also been amended. The phrase "each transmission unit being arranged for axially coupling the tubular end with the mandrel" has been changed to "each transmission unit in itself axially coupling the tubular end with the mandrel". This is supported by the drawings and specification. Particular reference is made to p. 2 lines 21-24 of the original International application as filed, and to the drawings which show each transmission unit itself axially coupling the tubular end with the mandrel.

In addition, the term "comprised of" has been changed back to "comprising".

In conclusion, it is respectfully submitted that the amendments are fully supported by the original application documents and do not constitute an addition of subject matter.

Allowability of the new claims 15 to 29

Each of claims 15 and 24 contain subject matter held allowable in the Office Action. They correspond to claims 4 and 11, rewritten in independent form including the features of the independent claim and any intermediate claim. Thus the claim objections made in the Office Action have been overcome.

Each of the remaining new claims ultimately depends on either claim 15 or claim 24. Hence, it is expected that all of claims 15 to 29 are presently allowable.

Claim rejections under 35 USC §102

Claims 1-3, 5, 6, 12 and 13 have been rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Trzeciak *et al* in US 4,729,675.

The Office Action asserts that "Trzeciak discloses a system for axially coupling a tubular end 23 with a mandrel 42. The system comprises a tubular end 23, a mandrel 42 for inserting into the tubular end in axial alignment thereof, thereby forming an annular space. Two or more transmission units (66,76) are arranged for axially coupling the tubular end with the mandrel." The Office Action further asserts "In normal circumstances, the transmission units (66,76) are arranged for axially coupling the tubular end with the mandrel. The transmission units comprises a first fixing element (66,76) a second fixture element (89,100), and spacer means (61,96,98) for maintaining an axial displacement between the first fixture element and the second fixture element."

Attorney for Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections, in as far as applicable to the amended claim 1.

The elements 66 and 76 in Trzeciak are bearing race members, in the form of rings, held in their axial positions by means of spacer sleeves such as 64, 70, 75 (see e.g. Col. 5 lines 41-43). Likewise, the elements 89 and 100 are bearing race members in the form of rings. These are held in their axial positions by means of spacer sleeves such as 88, 99 (see e.g. Col. 5 lines 44-47). Neither the sleeve members, nor the bearing races, are coupled directly to the tubular end 23 or to the mandrel 42. This becomes clear from Col. 8, lines 15-29, where it is explained that upon ball failure in one transmission unit the bearing race will be locked against the failed balls and co-rotate.

The only places where the transmission units in Trzeciak axially couple to the tubular end and the mandrel are at abutment 80 (tubular side) and at 52 (mandrel side) for forces pulling the mandrel downward relative to the tubular housing, or at abutment 37 and at 53 for forces pushing the mandrel upward relative to the tubular housing. This means that Trzeciak does not disclose or teach each transmission unit in itself axially coupling the tubular end

with the mandrel. Instead, the force from the mandrel to the tubular housing is transmitted from one transmission unit to the other via the sleeve members and bearing races, whereby the stack of transmission units together is axially couples the mandrel and the tubular end. Therefore, D1 does not disclose each of the transmission units in itself axially coupling the tubular end with the mandrel, as is required by Claim 1 in its currently amended form.

In fact, Trzeciak teaches away from physically locking the race members to the mandrel in order to avoid the bearing structure to seize upon bearing ball failure (see Col. 8 lines 15-29). Thus, Trzeciak also teaches away from each of the transmission units in itself to couple the tubular end with the mandrel.

Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claim rejections under 35 USC §103

Claims 7-10 have been rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Trzeciak *et al* in US 4,729,675.

Attorney for Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections.

Each one of claims 7-10 is ultimately dependent on claim 1 and therefore includes every feature of claim 1. It has been explained above that Trzeciak fails to disclose or suggest all the elements of claim 1. Therefore, Trzeciak also fails to disclose or suggest all the elements of claims 7-10.

MPEP 2143 states that to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, three basic criteria must be met. One of these three criteria is that the prior art reference must teach or suggest all the claim limitations.

For its failure to disclose or teach all the claim elements, Examiner has not established a *prima facie* case of obviousness. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Concluding remarks

The independent claims are claims 1, 15, and 24. As explained above, Trzeciak fails to disclose or suggest all the elements of claim 1, and for this reason withdrawal of the rejections of claim 1 and each claim dependent on claim 1 is respectfully requested. Claims 15 and 24 have been presented to comply with all express requirements made in the Office Action.

Thus, Attorney has addressed each and every ground for objection and rejection raised by the Examiner in the Office Action. Attorney respectfully submits that the application is in a state ready for allowance. In the event the Examiner has any questions or

issues regarding the present application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned prior to the issuance of any written action.

Respectfully submitted,

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